

Application No. 09/724,007

In the Abstract

Please substitute the following amended Abstract for the abstract as currently pending. A substitute sheet containing the amended Abstract is also provided.

Improved dip coating methods and mandrels for forming polymer leaflets and valve prostheses generally involve one or more features on the mandrel that facilitate the processing. The mandrel has a top surface and an outer surface comprising a plurality of ridges and contoured surfaces extending to the ridges. An edge on the mandrel separates the top surface and the contoured surfaces, with the mandrel edge corresponding to the free edge of the leaflet. In preferred embodiments, the edge separating the top surface from the contoured surfaces is sharp. The polymer formed on the top surface can be efficiently separated from the remaining portions of the polymer structure to form the free edges of the leaflets.

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 29-37 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 12-28 are canceled without prejudice in view of the restriction requirement. The title has been amended as suggested by the Examiner. Also, the abstract has been amended in view of an objection by the Examiner. New claims 30-37 are added.

New claims 30 and 31 are supported by the specification, for example, at page 28, lines 28-32. New claims 32 and 33 are supported by the specification, for example, at page 26, lines 12-20. New claims 34 and 36 are supported by the specification, for example, at page 27, lines 4-8. New claims 35 and 37 are supported by the specification, for example, at page 33, lines 1-3. No new matter is introduced by the amendments or the new claims.

All of the pending claims stand rejected. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections based on the following comments.

Election/Restriction Requirement

The Examiner imposed a restriction under 35 U.S.C. § 121 between two claim groups. Applicants confirm without traverse their provisional telephonic election of claims 1-11